

Engagement and Communications Strategy

CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)

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RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
**Climate Change,
Agriculture and
Food Security**



led by



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Executive summary

This communications and engagement strategy builds on the CGIAR Challenge Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) in 2009-2010. The new CCAFS – one of 15 CGIAR Research Programs – was initiated on 1 January 2011 has a larger scale, a different structure and an increased number of partners and a revised scope, goal and objectives. These call for a new and integrated engagement and communications strategy.

The objectives of the CCAFS engagement and communications strategy are:

- To provide a credible and authoritative platform for scientific information, knowledge and tools on agriculture and food security under climate change.
- To engage actively at all levels to facilitate user-driven research, science-based dialogue, knowledge sharing, and evidence-based policy, among key partners.

These objectives call for CCAFS to work within partnerships and coalitions in all aspects of its work – the new way of working in the CGIAR. Strategic partnerships will be critical to ensuring that research maintains relevancy to dynamic policy agendas, scientific knowledge is co-generated and co-owned, and space is created for science-based dialogue among different sectors and interest groups.

This strategy details:

- The new context for engagement and communications by CCAFS
- Principles for undertaking engagement and communications within a partnership framework
- Key groups of partners as identified through a participatory process
- Principles and mechanisms for working at scales from global to local
- Main approaches and overlapping areas of intervention in engagement and communications
- Plan for translating the over-arching strategy into annual practical workplans

The new CCAFS: a major partnership endeavour

The CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) was officially launched during the UN climate negotiations at COP16 in Cancun, Mexico on 4 December 2010. CCAFS is a 10-year strategic partnership of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and Future Earth, with an initial 3-year budget of US\$ 206 million. CCAFS brings together the world's best researchers in agricultural science, development research, climate science, and Earth System science, to identify and address the most important interactions, synergies and trade-offs between climate change, agriculture and food security. CCAFS partners with all 15 CGIAR centers and also intersects with the other CGIAR Consortium Research Programs (CRPs). This cross-center and cross-CRP initiative creates outstanding communications opportunities, and heralds a new way of working in the CGIAR.

The goal for CCAFS engagement and communications is:

- To promote a food-secure world through the provision of science-based efforts that support sustainable agriculture and enhance livelihoods while adapting to climate change and conserving natural resources and environmental services.

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- To provide a credible and authoritative platform for scientific information, knowledge and tools on agriculture and food security under climate change.
- To engage actively at all levels to facilitate user-driven research, science-based dialogue, knowledge sharing, and evidence-based policy, among key partners.

The cornerstone of CCAFS communications is credible, high-level research by CCAFS and its partners. CCAFS, together with partners, will look to position itself as the go-to resource for data, knowledge and feasible options on key issues. Within the global climate discussion, there is great need for evidence-based research and communications that can bring clarity to the complex trade-offs that exist between food security, development, and climate action. Through its scientifically authoritative yet diverse set of research and partnerships, CCAFS is well positioned to be an honest broker in the climate debate by bringing clarity to discussions around the trade-offs between food security and the environment, identifying evidence-based options for climate mitigation and adaption, and providing space for different interest groups to engage in dialogue that is underpinned by science.

Part of the vision of success for CCAFS is that it becomes the go-to place for key stakeholders seek relevant evidence, knowledge and tools to formulate options and strategies for tackling food insecurity in the face of climate change. The engagement and communications strategy will be supported by the emphasis in the research strategy on developing and implementing innovative approaches to strengthen the links among research, policy and practice. One of 12 CCAFS research objectives is devoted specifically to exploring and strengthening these links. Furthermore, the research agenda is predominantly participatory, co-designed and co-implemented with stakeholders including farmers. Partnerships will be essential, especially with organizations that work with farmers, and with global and local media to capture the attention of policy makers and general interest groups in public, private and civil society sectors.

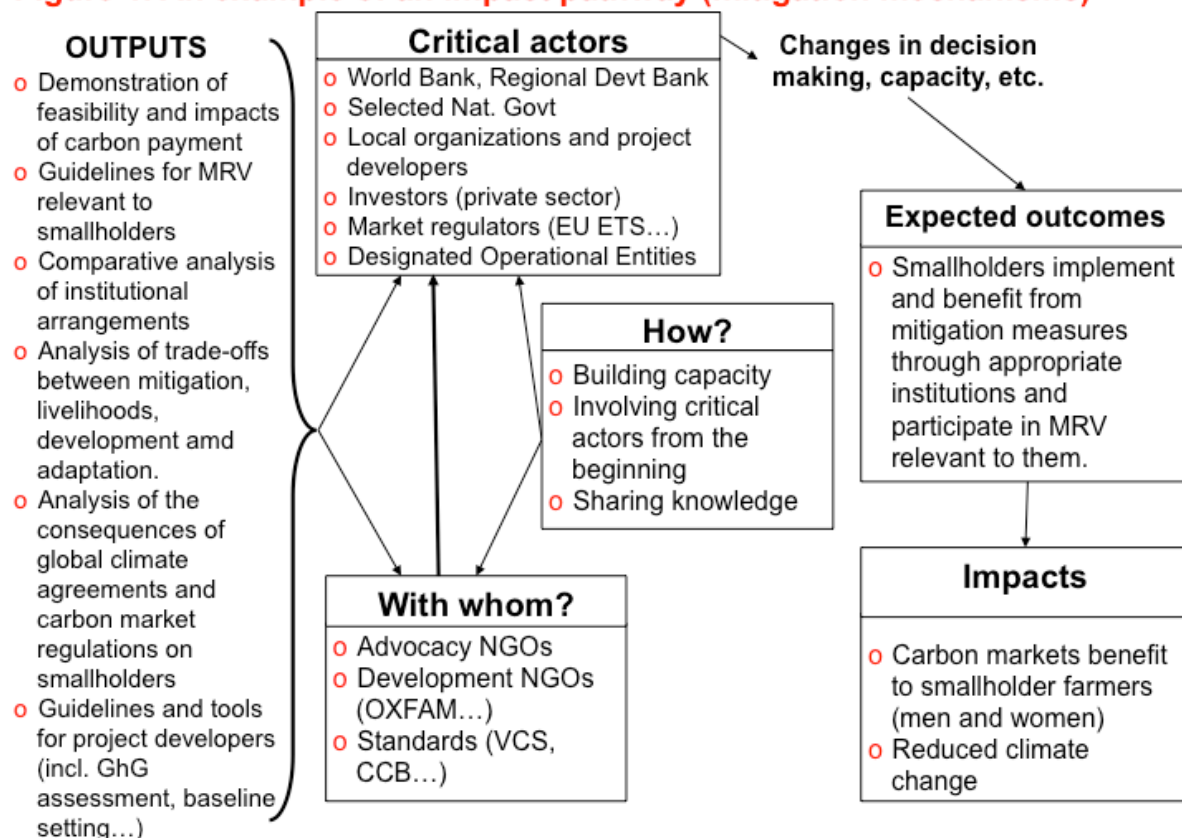
Achieving food security under conditions of growing demand, limited resources and climate change is one of the foremost challenges of our time. Again, integration within a network of partners will be crucial if CCAFS is to provide timely and relevant data, knowledge and tools for decision makers at all levels. Research work needs to respond directly to the dynamic demands of stakeholders. Research will be co-designed by research and policy communities and local partners so as to shape the research agenda to most effectively deliver what policy needs, and to empower agricultural and food policy makers and resource managers to demand, use and critique scientific knowledge in pursuit of the best possible futures for food and farming.

Principles for partnership, engagement and communications

The section above laid out a set of powerful rationales for partnerships to be the framework for all CCAFS work, from priority setting and research through to knowledge management and facilitation of dialogue. The most fundamental principle for CCAFS engagement and communications is to work with and be accountable to partners in all aspects of the work program. From this principle, which underpins the CGIAR's new structure and way of working, arise some further useful principles around partnership to guide CCAFS work on engagement and communications.

Linking knowledge and action in a complex policy environment: The various areas of CCAFS work have developed multi-year impact pathways that show the strategies in the research theme or region for achieving impact towards CCAFS goals (see Figure 1 for an example). These impact pathways involve different groups of partners to stimulate, scale up and embed the evidence base for policy change. CCAFS recognizes that influencing policy and practice is not a one-way process – the program needs to foster interchange between knowledge with action, rather than simply set up pathways for knowledge to inform action. Furthermore, CCAFS recognizes policy as dynamic and polycentric. The domains that CCAFS seeks to engage are not only state legislation and policy instruments, but also the processes of policy deliberation, formation and implementation, and the narratives and paradigms that determine how problems are understood and what solutions are considered tenable. In seeking to inform change in knowledge, attitudes and practices over the long term, CCAFS will focus effort both on formal government policies and on the much wider set of informal norms and procedures, including the strategies of producer organizations, local governance structures, and businesses.

Figure 1. An example of an impact pathway (mitigation mechanisms)



Keeping up with rapid change through “smart learning loops”: The CCAFS program has a number of mechanisms for regular monitoring, review and change under the rubric of “smart learning loops”. One of the chief benefits of strong partnership platforms is the capacity for reflexive approaches, where researchers keep returning to stakeholders to jointly develop means of adapting, learning and responding to feedback. Built into the engagement and communications strategy are several types of low-cost continual monitoring (e.g. of the needs and experiences of website visitors) to provide rapid feedback on the utility of science and policy outputs. In addition, a series of periodic larger-scale reviews and stakeholder consultations will keep the program responsive to arising issues and needs in the spheres of climate change, agriculture and food security at global, regional and national levels.

Providing space for evidence-based dialogue across interest groups: As well as contributing to the scientific knowledge base for agricultural and food system management, CCAFS will put effort into assuring access by a wide range of user groups, and bridging across disciplines. The second of the two over-arching objectives of CCAFS is to enable climate change policies to better include agriculture, and agricultural policies to better take account of climate change. Bringing together the “climate world” and the “agriculture for development world” will happen at all levels, for example involving national and regional meteorological agencies and their agricultural counterparts. CCAFS will seek to empower national and regional bodies to undertake their own diagnoses, analyses and generation of solutions rather than merely being recipients of expert knowledge. This will happen through its capacity enhancement activities that are mainstreamed into the work of the themes and

regions (see the CCAFS capacity enhancement strategy). CCAFS also recognizes that many of the most effective managers of agricultural systems under climate change, particularly women, may be excluded from formal public-sector policy and program processes. Therefore CCAFS envisages multiple strategic partnerships at different levels, from community to national to regional to international, seeking to involve these different users of knowledge right from the problem definition stage. These partnerships will foster a co-learning approach between CCAFS and decision-makers.

Key groups of partners

CCAFS used the Nairobi Conference on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security in May 2010 to work with stakeholders to identify pathways to impact for the CCAFS program. All of the pathways to impact involve working strategically with partners. The role of these global partners will be to provide accountability to the ultimate beneficiaries of CCAFS, create widespread positive change in policies and strategies, ensure reflexive science-policy dialogue, help set research agendas, share communication channels, interrogate scientific methods and results, and combine knowledge to generate best-bet policy options. Some partners are primarily targets for uptake of CCAFS research outputs, rather than direct collaborators in day-to-day work. Other partners may be involved, for example, in shaping the priorities and approaches of the CCAFS program, co-communicating key messages, convening stakeholder processes or developing policy options.

Following the Nairobi conference, the different types of key partners that stakeholders had identified were grouped into ten groups for purposes of the CCAFS engagement and communications strategy. The nine groups are outlined below (in no particular order).

- **Core partners:** Organisations directly managing and implementing the work of the program (15 CGIAR centers, CG Consortium and Fund, Future Earth university partners affiliated with CCAFS).
- **Policy makers and opinion leaders at international, regional and national levels:** Including policy makers in national (and sub-national) governments, regional initiatives and international institutions, climate change negotiators, governors of adaptation and mitigation funds, and opinion leaders in the spheres of food security, agriculture and climate change.
- **National agencies responsible for implementation of strategies for climate change, agriculture and food security:** Technical agencies responsible implementing policy, such as meteorology departments, agricultural extension services, marketing boards, crisis response centers, and environmental protection agencies.
- **Farmers' organizations and rural communities of practice:** To benefit and engage with farmers will depend crucially on links with intermediaries, including administrative offices of farmers' organizations, NGOs at different levels concerned with rural development, and networks designed to share emerging practice at the grassroots level.
- **Private sector, industry platforms, standards agencies and players in the carbon market:** Relevant private sector includes agribusinesses, input suppliers, and service providers

(including finance, insurance, communications, and companies that specialize in knowledge management or technical assistance). CCAFS will target their multi-company platforms and initiatives, as well as standards agencies and carbon market traders and regulators.

- **Civil society organizations at international, regional and national levels:** NGOs and coalitions involved in implementation and advocacy in the spheres of agriculture, climate, food security and development. Partnering with civil society women's organizations is key to the CCAFS strategy.
- **Research community:** Researchers within and beyond the CCAFS community including CGIAR, Future Earth networks and other research networks, universities, national agricultural research institutions (NARS) and international scientific processes such as the IPCC.
- **Donors:** Agencies that provide financial leadership in the agriculture-climate-food security-development arena, now or in the future.
- **Media:** The media may be considered not only an outlet for communication, but as a target group on their own, which may help broker messages between local and global.

CCAFS has an innovative feature in its formal alliance with the Future Earth community [which includes the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), the International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) and DIVERSITAS: An International Programme on Biodiversity Science]. The rationale behind this formal alliance is the marriage of two types of comparative advantage: the CGIAR in generation of new technologies and management systems of relevance to developing countries and Future Earth in advanced theory, tools and global understanding for biophysical and socioeconomic sciences.

Materials for communication will go beyond immediate CCAFS products, drawing in all noteworthy advances in science that link climate change, agriculture and food security. Building relationships with the media will be a strong focus, with a systematic approach to preparation, timing and networking carried out in close cooperation with the Consortium Office communications team, the Future Earth Communications Office, and the communications teams of core partners (15 CGIAR centers, CG Consortium and Fund, Future Earth university partners affiliated with CCAFS). A number of strategic partnerships will be developed specifically for global and regional outreach (e.g. CTA, Farming First) to work alongside core partners (see later section on Collective communications: A new way of working).

Linking the global, regional and national levels

CCAFS seeks to inform policy and practice at multiple scales – global, regional and local – and to address the connections among these scales. CCAFS will address the unique and exciting challenge of linking local, regional and global agricultural development and food security futures. The global engagement and communications strategy, which this document delineates, will guide overall practice by the CCAFS core partners and will be facilitated by the CCAFS Coordinating Unit. To be as locally relevant and effective as possible, each CCAFS region will develop annual workplans that align

with the global strategy. These will be led by the CCAFS Regional Program Leaders and the communications teams at their host CGIAR centers.

To achieve impact, both the global and regional workplans for engagement and communications will put major effort into one or two key outputs and outcomes per year, working closely with specific partners. Links with a wider set of partners in government, international bodies, civil society and private sector will be maintained and nurtured even if not currently active. Recognizing that many of the most influential policy changes occur at the national and sub-national levels, the regional engagement and communication workplans will specifically incorporate national and sub-national actions – such as linking with active policy forums at these levels, or providing nationally relevant analysis and messaging.

There will be regular iteration among the global and regional levels to ensure coherence and maximum use of arising opportunities and synergies. Mechanisms for maintaining alignment among the workplans and capitalizing on emerging synergies will be: use of a common format for workplans and categories of partners and approaches; annual review of workplans and reports against the overarching strategy and impact pathways, with scheduled critical discussion among CCAFS program management committee; bimonthly calls among Regional Program Leaders and the CCAFS coordinating unit; and sharing of information, approaches and activities among the set of Key Communicators in the core partner organizations.

Capacity enhancement is a key component of regional engagement. The overall goal of various interventions is to empower stakeholders by increased regional engagement with them and not to provide ready one-time solutions. Participatory action research will thus be a cornerstone of achieving impact. The research sites will allow for: co-production of relevant scientific knowledge, community-based pilots on technical and institutional options for adaptation and mitigation, implementation of the analogue method including farmer-to-farmer visits and learning, a focus on women and marginalized sectors of rural society, and opportunities for site demonstrations for policy makers and leaders from business and civil society. Similar work with partners will also be initiated at regional and national scales for co-assessing regionally differentiated vulnerabilities and opportunities, and consequences of actions/inactions of policy decisions.

In order to reach the desired impacts at scale, CCAFS will partner with major international multi-lateral and non-governmental agencies, while at the same time being grounded in work with national agricultural, natural resource, environmental and meteorological agencies, the private sector and local NGOs. By influencing global and regional policy processes, CCAFS and its partners will also be able to scale up impact.

Approaches to engagement and communications

To link knowledge and action effectively, and to put into practice the guiding principles outlined in this strategy, CCAFS approaches to engagement and communications are organized into nine overlapping areas of intervention:

- **User-driven research agendas** – ensuring that users of CCAFS knowledge are involved and well informed throughout the research cycle, from priority-setting through to uptake and critical review.
- **Co-production of global knowledge** – producing top quality science and innovations through participatory approaches and research partnerships.
- **Facilitating learning across sectors and interest groups** – convening and participating in processes and platforms for evidence-based dialogue that provide access to multiple interest groups and bridge climate science with agriculture.
- **Informing global, regional and national policies** – helping science effectively inform policy by tailored messaging and targeting to a wide range of policy makers and opinion leaders across sectors.
- **Enhancing capacity** – empowering CCAFS partners to apply, adapt and develop scientific knowledge, data and tools to meet their own specific needs (see CCAFS capacity enhancement strategy).
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – adapting the engagement and communications strategy in response to stakeholder demand, changing contexts and internal learning.
- **Participatory knowledge management** – investing in shared platforms and processes to maximize access to and ownership of scientific knowledge by CCAFS partners.
- **Internal knowledge sharing** – facilitating good communication and knowledge flow among core partners.
- **Program communication** – keeping partners, donors and stakeholders aware of program developments.

Putting the strategy into action

The nine types of key partners and nine areas of intervention identified in this strategy create an extremely challenging and ambitious work agenda. Prioritization will be needed. The CCAFS Coordinating Unit, at the global level, and the CCAFS regions, at the regional (plus national and continental levels as appropriate) will prepare annual workplans that prioritize a subset of actions and partners for that time period. In general, these workplans will limit engagement to two to three major initiatives with partners per year. The workplans will be made available on the CCAFS website.

Regular liaison will be kept up with a set of key partners, even if they are not currently cooperating on any major shared initiative. Formal memoranda of understanding will not be required, but will be possible where useful to the partner. A designated contact person in CCAFS will keep in regular contact with a contact person or persons in the partner organization in order to:

- Share regular updates on current work and future plans
- Prioritize when looking for co-hosts for events, platforms and publications
- Consult on research questions and policy opportunities
- Exchange invitations to key meetings
- Aim to influence with research outputs

As mentioned above, CCAFS will use a range of tools to communicate knowledge, evidence, tools and other outputs with specific groups, and to maintain a two-way conversation with partners. The mechanisms have been chosen to reach a good balance between one-way communication of knowledge and multi-way dialogue, to secure intended impacts. Outreach tools will be chosen to address a range of knowledge needs, from general information to sharply targeted outreach and dialogue. This includes making information available and accessible via the website, direct communication (newsletters, briefings, AgClim Letters and journal articles), and dialogue among stakeholders (events, webinars, blog). Particular effort will be put into a dynamic Agriculture and Rural Development Day (ARDD) at the annual UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP), aimed at raising the visibility of agriculture and food security in the global climate dialogue and advancing the position of agriculture in the negotiations. Communications products produced centrally by the CCAFS Coordinating Unit will similarly be kept within a manageable number per year, to maintain quality and global relevance.

CCAFS will make use of the following engagement and communications tools:

- Websites
- Journal articles
- CCAFS publications series
- Contributions to partner publications and websites
- Social media
- Multimedia e.g. video, photos, interactive maps, radio
- Future scenarios
- E-bulletins
- Verbal and visual presentations
- Teleconferencing, videoconferencing and webinars
- Media outreach
- Convening of events and platforms
- Participation in events and policy processes
- One-on-one interactions with key partners
- Peer review
- User feedback, communications surveys and review

Individual tools will be selected to achieve specific objectives and outputs (i.e. the tools will not drive the agenda). Table 1 below gives examples of how tools will be matched to types of partners and approaches. The basic language for engagement and communications activities is English. However, particularly in non-Anglophone regions, communication will also be conducted in other major languages, such as French, and regional languages, such as Swahili and Hausa. This will be decided on a case by case basis

Table 1: *Examples of tools for engaging and communicating with key groups of CCAFS partners*

Group of partners	Examples of partners	Approaches to engagement and communications	Knowledge sharing from CCAFS	Engagement and communications tools	Examples of communications partners
Core partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIAT, IRI, ICRAF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal KS Program communication Co-production of global knowledge Enhancing capacity Participatory KM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and admin updates Engagement opportunities Joint successes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-bulletins Blogs Online collaboration space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CGIAR contact points; Theme leaders + Sci officers; Comms units at Centres; CGIAR consortium office
Policy makers and opinion leaders at international, regional and national levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donors; Ministers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User-driven research agendas Informing global, regional, national policies Facilitate learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New results (non-technical) Targeted syntheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Briefings; Engagement at events and meetings; Ag-Clim letters Website & Blogs; press coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCAFS Theme leaders & RPLs Commission on Sustainable Ag & CC CTA
National agencies responsible for implementation of climate, climate change, agriculture and food security strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ag & Environment ministries; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User-driven research agendas Informing national policies Facilitate learning Enhancing capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New results (technical and non) Targeted syntheses Tools and data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical workshops Policy briefings Toolkits and working papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme leaders and RPLs National-level research partners
Farmers' organizations and rural communities of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACAU, ROPPA, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User-driven research agendas Facilitate learning Enhancing capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New farm-relevant results; Tools + approaches for sharing farm-relevant data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radio; Workshops and trainings mobile phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local NGOs Partners in national agencies and universities CTA

Private sector, industry platforms, standards agencies and players in the carbon market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BASFAgro PWC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate learning Co-production of global knowledge User-driven research agendas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New results (some technical) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Briefs, Reports and Working papers; Seminars and workshops E-bulletins; Website & Blogs; Via press coverage; Multimedia; Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CGIAR Comms partners; Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change CDKN
Civil society organizations at international, regional and national levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GenderCC; WEDO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User-driven research Co-production of knowledge Facilitate learning Enhancing capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing research (non-technical) Options for adaptation and mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events and workshops Multimedia Training manuals and toolkits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society partners
International, regional and national research communities in agriculture, climate and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global change community Other research networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-production of global knowledge Facilitate learning Enhancing capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing research New results (technical) Options for adaptation and mitigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Reports & Working papers; Engagement at events Website Ag-Clim letters Via press coverage; Multimedia; Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission on Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Change CCAFS core partners
Donors (current + potential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DFID, DANIDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate learning Informing global, regional and national policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program updates; New results (tech and non tech) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Briefs and Reports; Engagement at events; E-bulletins; Publications in donor magazines; Multimedia Website & blogs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Donor Platform for Rural Development; Commission on SACC Via CGIAR partners
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuters AlertNet Climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing global, national and regional policies Monitoring and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking research with current political debates, events, disasters, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website, Blogs & social media Specialized outreach Audiobriefings Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media units in CG and University partners Media partners e.g., African

CCAFS research will support the engagement and communications strategy by applying and testing a number of tools designed to link knowledge with action. Examples include participatory mapping of impact pathways, negotiation tools informed by research, social network analysis, innovation histories, cross-country analyses and game-theory modeling. Research will also investigate the effectiveness of different ways of communicating uncertainty around climate predictions to different audiences, and testing of new (e.g. cell phone-based) communication methods for communicating improved weather information to smallholders. A powerful approach to help decision makers address transformational challenges is participatory future scenarios exercises. These help to enhance decision making under uncertainty through the development of a structured range of plausible futures within which analyses of policy and technical interventions can be undertaken. They also provide an effective mechanism for involving a range of both public and private sector stakeholders and for facilitating debate and communication among them.

Collective communications: a new way of working

Communications will be implemented in collaboration between the CCAFS Coordinating Unit and CCAFS core partners:

- CCAFS themes and regions
- Communications offices of the 15 CGIAR centers
- CGIAR Fund communications team
- CGIAR Consortium Office communications team
- Communicators in the Future Earth network
- Communications offices at universities/departments affiliated with CCAFS through Theme Leaders and Scenarios Group (International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia, University of Vermont, University of Leeds, and Oxford Environmental Change Institute).

Overall coordination of communications and some specific activities lie with the CCAFS Coordinating Unit. However, the bulk of the responsibility for communicating CCAFS research activities is distributed across all 15 CGIAR centers, university partner institutions and Future Earth. In other words, CCAFS should not build up a major “central” communications unit but rather tap into the existing communication units within centers, universities and Future Earth partners. Funding for center and university communications activities on CCAFS should be drawn from CCAFS center and university budgets using the budgeting process that supports current communications activities.

CCAFS branding guidelines are available at <http://ccafs.cgiar.org/resources/branding-publishing-guides>

A collective approach to communications is fundamental to CCAFS, and to the new CGIAR. Adopting this will require strong internal communication flow within CCAFS on communications and outreach activities as an integrated part of the communications responsibilities of the above mentioned key partners to ensure knowledge sharing. For this purpose a CCAFS communications group has been

established, making effective use of existing key partner communications systems, the CCAFS website, a CCAFS communications group email and a CCAFS internal collaboration tools.